

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-04

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /005 R

66605

DRAFTED BY: EUR/EE/TBARTHELEMY

APPROVED BY: EUR/EE-RGJOHNSON

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R 281337Z SEP 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 193341

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE, USIA WASHDC FROM MOSCOW SEP 19  
REPEATED YOU:

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11385

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR

SUBJ: ARBATOV COMMENTS ON U.S. - SOVIET RELATIONS.

1. DURING SPASO HOUSE LUNCHEON SEPT 19 FOR USIA DIRECTOR  
KEOGH, USA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR ARBATOV EXPRESSED CONCERN  
THAT CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS COULD CAUSE SERIOUS SET-BACK TO  
U.S. - SOVIET RELATIONS. CONVERSATION WAS BRIEF BECAUSE  
ARBATOV LEFT EARLY FOR ANOTHER ENGAGEMENT.

2. ARBATOV SAID THAT WE ARE AT A SENSITIVE STAGE IN OUR  
RELATIONS AND HE IS WORRIED ABOUT THE EFFORTS OF GROUPS IN  
THE U.S. TO BLOCK BETTER RELATIONS BY RAISING MATTERS LIKE  
SAKHAROV AND JEWISH EMIGRATION. " WE CAN HELP TO SOME  
EXTENT" IN COPING WITH THESE PROBLEMS, BUT IT SEEMS THAT  
EACH ACCOMMODATION IS FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER DEMAND, AND A POINT  
WILL SOON BE REACHED BEYOND WHICH THE SOVIET SIDE CAN DO  
NOTHING MORE. IF THAT HAPPENS, THERE COULD BE VERY NEGATIVE  
REACTION IN THE SOVIET UNION." ASKED IF THAT MEANT HE COULD  
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FORESEE A TEMPORARY SETBACK TO OUR RELATIONS. ARBATOV SAID

IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ONE THING COULD LEAD TO ANOTHER, WITH RESULT THAT PRESENT POSITIVE TREND IN OUR RELATIONS COULD BE REVERSED FOR AS LONG AS A DECADE.

3. ASKED IF HE WERE DESCRIBING ATTITUDES OF HIGHER LEADERSHIP, ARBATOV SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN ON LEAVE AND HAD NOT BEEN HIGHER LEADERS FOR NEARLY TWO MONTHS, BUT THAT HE WAS RECENTLY BEEN IN TOUCH WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE AROUND TOWN AND BELIEVES HE IS ACCURATELY DESCRIBING PRESENT ATTITUDES OF LEADERSHIP.

4. ARBATOV ALSO COMMENTED THAT USIA HAS VERY RESPONSIBLE ROLE TO PLAY, ESPECIALLY AT PRESENT JUNCTURE. IT IS UNDERSTOOD IN MOSCOW THAT NEW YORK TIMES, OR EVEN WASHINGTON POST, DO NOT EXPRESS OFFICIAL U.S. VIEWS. BUT USIA AND VOA ARE REGARDED AS OFFICIAL SPOKESMEN FOR GOVERNMENT, AND WHAT THEY SAY AND DO IS TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY AS EXPRESSIONS OF U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY.

5. IN THIS CONTEXT, ARBATOV ALSO REFERRED TO RADIO LIBERTY AND RFE, SAYING THAT IN SOME SOVIET CIRCLES THE DECISION TO REQUEST CONTINUATION OF RFE WAS TAKEN AS AN ACT OF "BAD WILL". HE ASSERTED THAT PASSING THAT FRANK SHAKESPEARE HAD ONCE TOLD HIM THAT IF JAMMING OF VOA WERE STOPPED, RADIO LIBERTY WOULD BE CLOSED DOWN. (ON LATTER POINT, KEOGH NOTED THAT NEITHER HE NOR SHAKESPEARE COULD COMMENT AUTHORITATIVELY ON RADIO LIBERTY SINCE IT IS NOT IN ANY WAY CONNECTED WITH USIA.)

6. ABOVE ACCOUNT WAS CLEARED BY DIRECTOR KEOGH, WHO PLANS TO MEET ARBATOV LATER FOR MORE DETAILED DISCUSSION. KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 28 SEP 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** morefirh  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973STATE193341  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** EUR/EE/TBARTHELEMY  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS JOHNSON  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** morefirh  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 07 AUG 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <07-Aug-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <04 MAR 2002 by morefirh>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ARABATOV COMMENTS ON U.S. - SOVIET RELATIONS.  
**TAGS:** PFOR, UR  
**To:** MUNICH  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005